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MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BULLETIN

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The Museum Bulletin.

The reception with which the first number of the Bulletin met entirely justified the experiment as a means of keeping the public in touch with the Museum. Five thousand copies were issued, and these were taken up so readily that a second edition of five thousand had to be printed within a fortnight. Moreover, it was observed that of the many distributed in the Museum itself, very few were left in the building, a fact which indicated that they were really used for reference. In response to the Director's request for the opinions of those who received that number, many replies have been given, all showing that the project of issuing such a Bulletin has met with hearty approval, and that its continuance is desired.

The Bulletin will therefore be issued hereafter as frequently as there is material enough to warrant the publication of a new number, and not less than four times a year. Its object, as already stated, is to keep our Annual Subscribers, and others who are interested, informed of what is being done in the Museum, to call their attention to new acquisitions, and to show them, in brief and convenient form, where objects recently placed on exhibition may be found. It will be sent free to all Annual Subscribers and holders of Life Tickets, and will be given to visitors to the Museum. In the present number we are fortunate in having several announcements of exceptional interest to make, such as the receipt of the splendid gift of Francis Bartlett, the acquisition of an important example of Copley, and of the five pictures bequeathed by Josiah Bradley, all of which are described in the following columns.

Edward Waldo Forbes has been elected a Trustee of the Museum to fill the vacancy on the Board caused by the death of General Charles Greely Loring.

The twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Museum has been published. The Report of the Executive Committee contains a statement showing the progress of the action taken by the Building Committee and the prospects of achieving success in erecting the new museum. In addition to the Director's Report, there is one from each of the persons in charge of the departments, giving an account of the objects under their charge. At the beginning of the Report is a sketch, written by Mr. Benjamin Ives Gilman, of the life of the late General Charles G. Loring. The Report of the Executive Committee shows that the annual deficiency in the current expenses account amounted last year to \$18,000.

Copley's Portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Izard.

In this picture the Museum has recently acquired a most important example of Copley's art, and one that has a unique interest in the history of his career. The story of the picture, as gathered principally from Mrs. Amory's Life of Copley, is as follows:

Copley left Boston for England in the spring of 1774, being then thirty-seven years of age. Up to that time he had, in the words of his son, Lord Lyndhurst, "never seen a decent painting," a statement which perhaps needs some qualification, though it may well be doubted whether he ever saw anything here better than his own work after he attained

maturity. It seems equally certain that he never could have had practical instruction from a painter after he was fourteen, as both his stepfather, Pelham, and Smibert died then, and these appear to have been the only men in Boston who were capable of teaching him. His visit to England thus marked the first time that he came in contact with real masters, either living or on canvas. After a few weeks there, he started for Italy, and on the journey fell in with Mr. and Mrs. Izard, who were also bound for Rome. Mr. Izard was a wealthy South Carolina planter, who had been educated in England, and apparently spent much of his time there. His wife was Miss Alice Delancey, of New York. During the following winter Copley saw much of these people in Rome, and made the journey to Naples and Paestum with them. While in Rome Mr. Izard persuaded him to paint their portraits, which he did on a single canvas. The price agreed upon was two hundred guineas. So far as is known, this was the first group Copley ever painted, and it appears also to have been the only original picture he undertook while on his travels, for his letters to his wife show that his mind and his time were entirely absorbed in the enjoyment and study of the scenes and the masterpieces among which he found himself.

For some reason the portrait was not delivered to the Izards in Rome, but was carried by Copley back to England, where he arrived in the following autumn. In the meantime the approach and outbreak of the American Revolution produced difficulties in Mr. Izard's financial affairs, and he was no longer able to pay for the picture, which therefore remained, rolled up, in Copley's possession until his death, in 1815, and was retained by his widow for ten years longer. In 1825 Mr. Charles Manigault, a grandson of Mr. Izard, being in London and knowing of the picture, went to inquire of Mrs. Copley whether it was still in existence. It was found just as Copley had left it, and thus, fifty years after it was painted, it passed into the possession of the family for whom it was intended, and by whom it has been owned until the present time.

The canvas is almost as large as that of the "Family Group," by the side of which it now hangs, measuring 7 ft. 4 in. in length by 5 ft. 9 in. in height. A reproduction of it was published in McClure's Magazine for February of this year. Mr. and Mrs. Izard are seated at opposite sides of a small table, of characteristic Roman style, with gilt frame and highly polished red porphyry top. Mr. Izard, in gray cloth, sits at the left, on a chair upholstered in the rose damask which Copley loved so well to paint, and Mrs. Izard sits on a sofa of the same material, with a heavy rose damask curtain draped above her. She is dressed in French blue taffeta, with a white gauze scarf over it, and wears a cap of muslin and lace. Both figures are painted in Copley's Boston style, with some of his early rigidity in the man, but the lady is executed in his best manner, as regards both the drapery and flesh.

In the middle distance, between the figures, stands the marble group known as "Orestes and Elektra," which was in the Villa Ludovisi; and Mrs. Izard has apparently just finished a drawing of this, which her husband is examining. Other souvenirs of their Italian journey are included, such as the Colosseum, which appears in the background, and a large Greek vase, which stands upon a parapet ending in a large column, at the left.

This picture has been purchased by the Museum with the Edward Ingersoll Browne Fund.